WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composition of matter selected from the group consisting of:

a) a substantially pure or recombinant C23 polypeptide exhibiting identity over a length of at least 12 contiguous amino acids to SEQ ID NO: 2;

b) a natural sequence C23 of SEQ ID NO: 2;

c) a fusion protein comprising C23 sequence.

2. A substantially pure or isolated polypeptide comprising a segment exhibiting sequence identity to a corresponding portion of a C23 of Claim 1, wherein:

a) said identity is over at least 15 contiguous amino acids;

b) said identity is over at least 19 contiguous amino acids; or

c) said identity is over at least 25 contiguous amino acids.

3. The composition of matter of Claim 1, wherein said:

a) C23 comprises a mature sequence of Table 1;

b) polypeptide:

i) is from a warm blooded animal selected from a mammal, including a rodent or primate;

ii) comprises at least 27 contiguous amino acids of SEQ ID NO: 2;

iii) exhibits a plurality of said lengths exhibiting said identity;

iv) is a natural allelic variant of SEQ ID NO: 2;

v) has a length at least about 30 amino acids;

vi) exhibits at least two non-overlapping epitopes which are specific for a mammalian C23;

vii) exhibits a sequence identity over at least 33 amino acids to SEQ ID NO: 2;

viii) exhibits at least two non-overlapping epitopes which are specific for SEQ ID NO: 2;

ix) exhibits sequence identity over a length of at least about 20 amino acids to SEQ ID NO: 2;

x) is not glycosylated;

xi) has a molecular weight of at least 3 kD;

xii) is a synthetic polypeptide;

xiii) is attached to a solid substrate;

xiv) is conjugated to another chemical moiety;

xv) is a 5-fold or less substitution from natural sequence; or

xvi) is a deletion or insertion variant from a natural sequence.

4. A composition comprising:

a) a sterile C23 polypeptide of Claim 1,

b) said C23 polypeptide of Claim 1 and a carrier, wherein said carrier is:

i) an aqueous compound, including water, saline, and/or buffer; and/or

ii) formulated for oral, rectal, nasal, topical, or parenteral administration.

5. The fusion protein of Claim 1, comprising:

a) mature protein sequence of Table 1;

b) a detection or purification tag, including a FLAG, His6, or Ig sequence; or

c) sequence of another cytokine or growth factor protein.

6. A kit comprising a polypolypeptide of Claim 1, and:

a) a compartment comprising said polypeptide; and/or

b) instructions for use or disposal of reagents in said kit.

7. A binding compound comprising an antigen binding portion from an antibody, which specifically binds to a natural C23 polypeptide of Claim 1, wherein:

a) said polypeptide is a primate C23;

b) said binding compound is an Fv, Fab, or Fab2 fragment;

c) said binding compound is conjugated to another chemical moiety; or

d) said antibody:

i) is raised against a peptide sequence of a mature polypeptide of Table 1;

ii) is raised against a mature C23;

iii) is raised to a purified C23;

iv) is immunoselected;

v) is a polyclonal antibody;

vi) binds to a denatured C23;

vii) exhibits a Kd to antigen of at least 30 μM;

viii) is attached to a solid substrate, including a bead or plastic membrane;

ix) is in a sterile composition; or

x) is detectably labeled, including a radioactive or fluorescent label.

8. A kit comprising said binding compound of Claim 7, and:

a) a compartment comprising said binding compound; and/or

b) instructions for use or disposal of reagents in said kit.

9. A method of:

A) making an antibody of Claim 7, comprising immunizing an immune system with an immunogenic amount of a primate C23 polypeptide thereby causing said antibody to be produced; or

B) producing an antigen:antibody complex, comprising contacting a primate C23 polypeptide with an antibody of Claim 7 thereby allowing said complex to form.

10. A composition comprising:

a) a sterile binding compound of Claim 7, or

b) said binding compound of Claim 7 and a carrier, wherein said carrier is:

i) an aqueous compound, including water, saline, and/or buffer; and/or

ii) formulated for oral, rectal, nasal, topical, or parenteral administration.

11. An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide or fusion protein of Claim 1, wherein:

a) said C family protein is from a primate; or

b) said nucleic acid:

i) encodes an antigenic peptide sequence of Table 1;

ii) encodes a plurality of antigenic peptide sequences of Table 1;

iii) exhibits at least about 80% identity to a natural cDNA encoding said segment;

iv) is an expression vector;

v) further comprises an origin of replication;

vi) is from a natural source;

vii) comprises a detectable label;

viii) comprises synthetic nucleotide sequence;

ix) is less than 6 kb, preferably less than 3 kb;

x) is from a mammal, including a primate;

xi) comprises a natural full length coding sequence;

xii) is a hybridization probe for a gene encoding said C family protein; or

xiii) is a PCR primer, PCR product, or mutagenesis primer.

12. A cell or tissue comprising a recombinant nucleic acid of Claim 11.

13. The cell of Claim 12, wherein said cell is:

a) a prokaryotic cell;
b) a eukaryotic cell;
c) a bacterial cell;
d) a yeast cell;
e) an insect cell;
f) a mammalian cell;
g) a mouse cell;
h) a primate cell; or
i) a human cell.

14. A kit comprising said nucleic acid of Claim 11, and:
a) a compartment comprising said nucleic acid;
b) a compartment further comprising a C23 polypeptide; and/or
c) instructions for use or disposal of reagents in said kit.

15. A method of:
A) making a polypeptide, comprising expressing said nucleic acid of Claim 11, thereby producing said polypeptide; or
B) making a duplex nucleic acid, comprising contacting said nucleic acid of Claim 11 with a hybridizing nucleic acid, thereby allowing said duplex to form.

16. A nucleic acid which:
a) hybridizes under wash conditions of 30° C and less than 2M salt to SEQ ID NO: 1; or
b) exhibits at least about 85% identity over a stretch of at least about 30 nucleotides to a primate C23.

17. The nucleic acid of Claim 16, wherein:
a) said wash conditions are:
i) at 45° C and/or 500 mM salt; or
ii) at 55° C and/or 150 mM salt; or
b) said identity is:

i) at least 90% and/or said stretch is at least 55 nucleotides; or

ii) at least 95% and/or said stretch is at least 75 nucleotides.

18. A method of modulating physiology or development of a cell or tissue culture cells comprising contacting said cell with an agonist or antagonist of a C23.

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